

# THORNFIELD MEDICAL GROUP

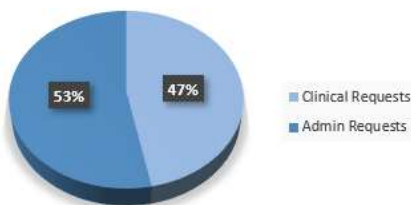
SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2024

NEWSLETTER



During the month of August 2024, we had a total of 4,594 SystemConnect requests from patients.

## SystemConnect Requests



47% were 'Clinical' requests and 53% were 'Administrative' requests.

Weekly we are still receiving the same number of calls into the practice however, we can already see a big change!

The average wait time and the number of abandoned calls has reduced, and we are looking forward to seeing how this continues and improves over the next few months.

"I really prefer the new system of online booking appointments"

"I got an appointment quicker with the online system than I did by ringing to make an appointment."

Welcome to our latest newsletter, we will be sharing the latest updates here at the practice and some important information with you!

## Systemconnect

Systemconnect is the new way to contact us and access our services, it requires an online form to be completed which will then come through to the Care Navigators here at the surgery.

The Care Navigators view the form and signpost patients to the most appropriate service for their care. This could be a Doctor, Advanced Clinical Practitioner, Pharmacist, Pharmacy, Nurse, Walk in Centre, or A&E.

This change has been implemented in response to feedback from patients about the high call queue, and the difficulty getting through on the phone line. This means there will be no need to wait in the queue at 08:30am.

We still have the phone line available for those who are unable to access the internet, and we are providing one to one training with patients who will need extra help or support using the online form.

The form can be accessed via our website [www.thornfieldmedicalgroup.org.uk](http://www.thornfieldmedicalgroup.org.uk) or by scanning one of the QR codes found at reception, we can also send you a link via text!

# New staff at Thornfield Medical Group

## Dr Nakissa Dobson

Dr Dobson has recently moved to Thornfield Medical Group from a GP practice in North Tyneside. She graduated from Newcastle Medical School in 2007 and has worked as a qualified GP in Newcastle and Australia since 2016. Dr Dobson works Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and a Thursday morning.



## Dr Rameen Dodds

Dr Dodds graduated from the University of Leeds and has been a GP for 8 years, he has also worked as a Locum GP. He works at Thornfield on a Tuesday and Thursday.



## Dr Caroline Tait

Dr Tait is Newcastle Medical School Graduate and has been a doctor since 2010. She has recently qualified as a GP earlier this year. She works at Thornfield on a Tuesday and Thursday.



## Dr Stephen Budas

Dr Budas graduated medical school in 2011 at the University of Dundee and qualified as a GP in 2018. He has been working around the West of Scotland until earlier this year. He is also trained to offer a variety of steroid injections. Dr Budas works Monday to Thursday.



## Dr Elsa Randles

Dr Randles graduated Newcastle Medical School in 2002 and qualified as a GP in 2007. She is head of Undergraduate GP Teaching at the University of Sunderland and works at Thornfield Medical Group on Tuesdays. Dr Randles previously worked for the practice during the COVID pandemic from 2020-2021.



## Gail – Digital Care Co-ordinator

The main Duties of my role are:  
Point of contact for all IT issues & procurement of new equipment.  
Training of staff in use of Systm1 and other IT training as needed. Manage, develop, and upkeep the TMG Website.  
I also work with Clinicians & Management in providing Audits & Reports in house and for the PCN.



## Kaitlin – Care Navigator



I started working at Thornfield in August, I am currently in training to be a Care Navigator, I will be learning to help patients get the right help they need. I also support the clinical staff with administrative tasks.

## Social Prescribing Link Workers – SPLW Team

SPLWs connect people to community-based support, including activities and services that meet practical, social, and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. This includes connecting people to statutory services for example housing, financial and welfare advice.

Some things the SPLWs can help with:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Financial problems
- Letters
- Power of attorney
- Getting food parcels/food vouchers/clothing/appliances/utilities/toiletries
- Homelessness
- Bereavement/mental health/loneliness
- Support with hospital appointments
- Addiction support



If they can't help you directly, they will try their very best to find someone or something that can!

Speak to a Care Navigator or one of the Clinicians if you feel as though you could use their help.

Our SPLW team consists of Karen, Michelle, and Julia.

## Cervical Screening

Nearly 1 in 3 women do not attend their cervical screening test (smear).

We know everybody's experiences and worries are different but, we are here to support you as much as we can!

We are running a monthly raffle for those who have attended for their smear, and at the end of each month we will select a winner at random. We have had 3 winners already, well done!

The NHS will contact you when it is time for your screening.



## What is menopause?

Menopause is the time in a woman's life when her periods stop.

Ovaries produce the hormones oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone. When a woman approaches the menopause, less oestrogen is produced causing her body to behave differently. This process is usually a gradual one that progresses over several years. Oestrogen also plays an important role in maintain bone and heart health as well as brain function during the reproductive years.

The menopause usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age. The average age in the UK is 51. It is defined as when a woman has had no periods for one year or more. Before then a woman will experience 'early perimenopause' and 'late perimenopause'.

The most common symptoms are hot flushes and night sweats, experienced by 70-80% of woman. Other symptoms include disturbed sleep and insomnia, low energy, low mood, anxiety, low libido, impaired memory/concentration, brain fog, joint aches, headaches, palpitations, and vaginal dryness.

If you would like to discuss the menopause, please contact us to arrange an appointment with a GP.

Dr Gray is our menopause champion and ensures the practice is up to date with the latest guidance and advice.

Search 'Menopause Matters' or 'International Menopause Society' for more trusted information!



## Healthier Together Programme

The Healthier Together website and app is a great place to find accurate and trusted health advice in the Northeast. All the information has been checked by clinicians to ensure the advice offered is to the highest standards.

You can find advice relating to poorly babies, children, carers, young people and expecting mothers.

It can advise on a range of common conditions and what the best course of action should be like visiting A&E, GP, Walk in Centre, or Pharmacy by using a walk-through symptom checker.

Visit <https://www.nenc-healthiertogether.nhs.uk/> or scan the QR code on the back of this newsletter to download the app!



## Local Help

Our local area has a lot to offer if you are struggling.

You can visit the below link [www.feedingfamilies.org.uk/get-help/](http://www.feedingfamilies.org.uk/get-help/) which has some useful links to help navigate you to the correct help in your area. If not, ask to speak to one of our Social Prescribers!

Some local help:

- CAP Debt Counselling, call 0800 328 0006 to arrange an appointment.
- Search Trussell Trust to find local food banks.
- Peoples Kitchen can provide a free hot meal daily.
- Vinnies Kitchen, Byker Bridge, you can get 10 items for £5.00.
- Newcastle Pop Up Pantry – google to find local pop-up areas and dates.
- Food Cycle:

Every Thursday 7pm at St Silas' Church, Clifford Street, Byker, NE6 1DR.

Every Wednesday 12:30pm at Monkchester Community Centre, Monkchester Road, Walker, NE6 2LJ



# Vaccinations

## RSV Vaccine

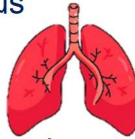
The RSV vaccine helps protect against respiratory syncytial virus. RSV is a common cause of coughs and colds.

Most people get it several times during their life. It usually gets better by itself, but in some people like babies and older adults, it can cause illnesses such as:

- Pneumonia (lung infection)
- Bronchiolitis (chest infection that affects babies)

These illnesses can cause serious breathing problems, which may need to be treated in hospital, and can sometimes be life-threatening.

The RSV vaccine helps reduce the risk of serious breathing problems like those listed above.



## Flu Vaccine

the flu vaccine helps protect against flu, which can be a serious or life-threatening illness. It's offered on the NHS every year in autumn or early winter to people at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu.

You can get the free NHS flu vaccine if you:

- Are aged 65 or over
- Have certain long-term health conditions
- Are pregnant
- Live in a care home
- Are the main carer for an older or disabled person, or receive carers allowance
- Live with someone who has a weakened immune system

Frontline health and social care workers can also get a flu vaccine through their employer.

## Shingles Vaccine

Shingles is a common condition that causes a painful rash. It can sometimes lead to serious problems such as long-lasting pain, hearing loss or even blindness.

You're more likely to get shingles, and it's more likely to cause serious problems, as you get older or if you have a weakened immune system.

The shingles vaccine helps to reduce your chances of getting shingles or getting serious problems if you do get shingles.

You can get the free shingles vaccine if:

- You have turned 65 on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023
- Aged 70-79
- 50 + with a severely weakened immune system

If you're eligible for one of these vaccines, we will be in touch with you!

## Upcoming vaccination clinics at Thornfield:

### RSV Vaccine

- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September

### Flu Vaccine

- Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October
- Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October



We will send an invitation to you if you're eligible for either vaccine.

Don't worry, if you miss these clinics, we can book you in for an appointment to have your vaccination. Speak to a Care Navigator to book an appointment.

Please note we are not able to give the RSV vaccine at the same time as the Flu vaccine.

## Autumn COVID vaccinations

As we move more into autumn, protection from any earlier COVID-19 vaccination you may have had will be starting to decrease. For those who are more likely to become seriously ill from COVID-19, the NHS offers a free vaccine in the autumn, previously known as the 'Autumn Booster'.

The groups to be offered a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2024/25 are:

- Residents in a care home for older adults
- All adults aged 65 years and over
- Persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- Frontline NHS and social care workers, and those working in care homes for older people

The NHS will contact eligible patients directly, but you can book by:

- Booking online
- Go to a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site
- Through a local NHS service
- Through your care home



## Friends and Family Test

We value your feedback on our services. The Friends and Family Test (FFT) is an important tool that allows the opportunity for feedback on your experience with Thornfield Medical Group.

Listening to your views helps identify what is working well, what can be improved on and how.

We publish the data monthly on the practice website.

To submit feedback please scan this QR code!



Scan the QR code to complete an online request form.



This can be used for both clinical and administrative requests including home visits, fit notes, letters, and medication.

If you're unable to use online, please let us know and we will look to see how we can help you.

You can also order your medication by using the NHS app or by handing in a paper request into reception.



\*Please note all medication requests take 2 working days to be processed and sent to your nominated pharmacy.

## Download the NHS Healthier Together app



## Upcoming Practice Closures

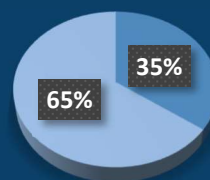
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 from 12:00pm – Staff training
- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 from 12:00pm – Staff training
- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (Christmas Day)
- Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (Boxing Day)
- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 (New Years Day)

If you need assistance during this time please visit a Walk in Centre, call 111 or in an emergency dial 999.



During the month of August 2024 437 patients did not attend their Clinical appointments

### Did Not Attend Appointments



- GP/ANP Appointments
- Nurse/HCA Appointments

35% of missed appointments were with a Doctor or Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

65% of missed appointments were with a Nurse or Health Care Assistant.

In total this equates to 113 hours of Clinical time wasted through patient not cancelling their appointments.

If you cannot make your appointment, please let us know so we can give it to someone else.

To cancel you can press option 1 on our phone line, reply to your reminder SMS message or cancel via the NHS app.

